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ABSTRACT

A group of teacher education faculty, state certification officers, and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) staff share what they have learned from State-NCATE joint review and accreditation visits. In the state-NCATE-based approach, the NCATE reviews the operation of the units, and the state reviews content preparation programs using its own process and standards. Dilemmas concerning the joint review that are addressed include: (1) issues of partnership versus ownership; (2) process versus product frameworks in planning; and (3) proactive versus reactive measures for institutions of higher learning and state organizations for the accreditation of teacher education. Conceptual and practical suggestions are offered for working collaboratively to develop high-quality teacher education programs and successful joint review and accreditation visits. The successful cooperation between states and the NCATE has been demonstrated at the Catholic University of America and Gallaudet University. The joint review process will work successfully if all constituents understand that collaboration efforts are about the children who will benefit. (Contains 1 table and 11 references.) (Author/SLD)

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HOW TO SUCCEED IN A JOINT STATE-NCATE REVIEW

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HOW TO SUCCEED IN A JOINT STATE-NCATE REVIEW

Abstract

A group of teacher education faculty, state certification officers, and NCATE staff share what they have learned from State-NCATE joint review and accreditation visits. Dilemmas concerning the joint review are addressed and include: issues of partnership versus ownership, process versus product frameworks in planning, and proactive versus reactive measures for Institutions of Higher Learning and state ACTE associations. Conceptual and practical suggestions are offered for working collaboratively to develop high-quality teacher education programs and successful joint review and accreditation visits.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN A JOINT STATE-NCATE REVIEW

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Introduction

Coming up for a joint review and accreditation visit? This is a question that is asked with frequency, inquisitiveness, and empathy at the quarterly state meetings of education deans and administrators with the District of Columbia Public Schools. Since 1995, three such visits within universities in the District of Columbia have taken place, with three more planned by the year 2000. This query summons rushes of anxiety for those anticipating the visit or moans of exhaustion and temporary relief for those who just completed a visit. Tensions are inevitable in any large-scale review which involves an enormous amount of energy, time, and commitment to addressing national and state standards. Historically, standards have been top-down or externally imposed. This arrangement has been difficult for teacher educators who, in their own classrooms, practice their craft in a fairly autonomous manner. Some believe that the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) does not represent the best interests of some constituents. Before the redesign of NCATE standards, some found the accreditation process to be an expensive, labor-intensive undertaking, which later became complicated by the folio review process (Gardner, Scannell, & Wisniewski, 1996). Others have found it beneficial for updating and strengthening programs, for fostering inter-department cooperation, and for designing studies

with graduates for suggestions on program revisions (Coombs & Allred, 1993).

As a group of educators, we decided to share the lessons learned from joint State-NCATE visits so that others might benefit from our experiences (Samaras et al., 1997). In this article, we present reflections upon the joint State-NCATE review process which were generated from the joint reviews and accreditation visits of two universities (The Catholic University of America (CUA) and Gallaudet University) each of which worked closely with the District of Columbia Public Schools Teacher Education and Certification Branch and the NCATE office. CUA was the first university in the state to undertake a joint State-NCATE review and accreditation visit. Both CUA and Gallaudet have been active and long-time members of The District of Columbia Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (DCACTE), and have been accredited by NCATE and state approved by the District of Columbia schools using the standards of The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) for a number of years.

As university educators and directors of state and NCATE offices, we offer our suggestions for successful joint reviews. Some of us base our ideas on experiences as university professors with extensive and differential experiences in accreditation visits; i.e., as Dean, directors, coordinators, chairs of accreditation committees, members of a Board of Examiners (BOE), chair of an NCATE BOE, or as state team members. Unlike many conversations around accreditation visits, however, we have integrated the voices of a State director and an NCATE director in our story.

We asked ourselves many questions:

- What can institutions of higher education (IHE) do to be proactive in the reassessing and shaping of joint review and accreditation visits?
- Should the process stay fluid with constant input by those it impacts most?
- What are the benefits in working collegially and interprofessionally in designing the process of accreditation?
- What role can state ACTE associations play in sharing insights with other state IHE's?

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- What are the benefits of walking together to fulfill common goals and professional commitment to children, communities, and society?

We frame our reflections around three major dilemmas which emerged from our conversations and experiences: 1) Partnership versus Ownership, 2) Process versus Product, and 3) Proactive versus Reactive.

1. Partnership Versus Ownership

The Partnership Program

Today, NCATE has Partnerships with 40 states, including the District of Columbia. The idea behind the Partnership program is a simple one -- consolidate and coordinate the review processes teacher preparation institutions must undertake. The Partnership program allows NCATE and a state to jointly review those schools of education that voluntarily seek NCATE accreditation. Thus, institutions may become nationally accredited and satisfy state approval requirements without undergoing two separate reviews.

NCATE recognizes the diversity among states in their approach to quality assurance for the teaching profession. Because of the many variations, states are free to design Partnerships which best meet their needs by choosing one of three standards options: 1) State-NCATE-based; 2) NCATE-based; and, 3) Performance-based.

In the State-NCATE-based approach, NCATE reviews the operation of the units, and the state reviews content preparation programs using its own process and standards. State program standards are subject to NCATE recognition based on optional folio reviews by national specialized professional associations. Depending on the results of these reviews, institutions may need to submit curriculum folios to NCATE if they desire national recognition for programs. Most Partnerships are based on this model.

In thirteen states, NCATE conducts the review of the unit and content area preparation programs using national specialized professional association guidelines in a folio review process

under the NCATE-based standards approach. The state uses evidence from NCATE's accreditation findings in making independent state approval decisions for the institution and its content area preparation programs.

The third type of Partnership is one in which the state establishes a comprehensive performance-based licensing system that meets NCATE's criteria. NCATE conducts the review of the unit and considers the performance of the institution's teacher candidates throughout their preparation and of its graduates on licensing assessments. NCATE and the state work together to develop standards and programs that meet the state's needs. Indiana and Kentucky are pursuing the performance-based Partnership as of this writing.

Once the state chooses its standards base, it may then tailor the composition of the review team according to its choice of standards and its own needs. States may select either a joint State-NCATE team to conduct both the state and unit review; separate teams that conduct concurrent state and NCATE reviews; or an all-NCATE team. Most states prefer the joint team composition.

The Partnership protocol provides a blueprint for the respective roles, responsibilities, and expectations of NCATE, the state, and institutions during on-site visits. The protocol must be flexible, and is subject to regular review, revision, and improvement based on past experience and new circumstances. A primary objective of the Partnership program is to facilitate cooperation between the teaching profession and state agencies; therefore, the Partnership agreement is *jointly* developed by NCATE and the state agency with authority over teacher education approval. Representatives of the state's teacher education institutions should be among those included in the development of the Partnership protocol. Equally beneficial is the advice from members of NCATE's Board of Examiners. Before finalizing the agreement, NCATE expects state officials to solicit input from teacher education institutions and other education stakeholder groups in the state.

Jointly, NCATE and states have the resources to create this system. By eliminating unnecessary costs, involving all education stakeholders, using the highest professional standards, and working toward performance-based licensing, the Partnership Program can advance the

common vision of a true quality assurance system for the teaching profession.

Reflections of the Partnership Process

In September 1994, the NCATE's State Partnership Board entered into a partnership agreement with the District of Columbia. As indicated in the protocol for the District, the state accreditation visit is conducted concurrently with the NCATE visit. The District of Columbia has participated in three successful joint accreditation visits since November 1995 (CUA, Howard University, and Gallaudet University). The process was initiated with some apprehensiveness but due to the commitment of each institution, the team members, and the state liaison, the process has now evolved into a collaborative network for program approval. Each joint visit has its own element of uniqueness and success depending on:

**Preparedness of the State and NCATE Teams*

Teams must be comprised of highly qualified evaluators with expertise in the proposed areas for review (NCATE standards/ program standards). In working in a collaborative framework, team members must be knowledgeable of both review processes. Additionally, team members must be cognizant of the institutional culture in determining the effectiveness of the teacher education programs. Gallaudet University offered both teams an opportunity to understand the unique culture of its university and the use of interpreters with the deaf population. Since each university has its own "character," university representatives should be allowed to provide a brief presentation during a joint team orientation to outline the background of the institution. This joint orientation for all team members has proven to heighten the awareness of the dual responsibilities of each team.

**Preparedness of the State Liaison*

The state liaison person must be knowledgeable about the NCATE process as well as the State program review process and understand the linkage among all standards. The joint review process should not become an ownership issue between the State and NCATE. The ability to bridge all

parties (institution, NCATE team, and State team) into one cohesive entity is crucial for a successful visit. At times the state liaison can also become a *positive mediator* in ensuring the fairness and equity of the process.

The state liaison is responsible for:

- Reviewing the protocol with the NCATE chairperson in advance of the visit.
- Coordination of the "template" (the model schedule of events).
- Reviewing both institutional reports prior to dissemination to team members.
- Familiarizing the State team with the purpose of the joint visit, including an overview the NCATE standards.
- Participating in on-going discussions with both Sate and NCATE team chairpersons prior to and during the visit.
- Encouraging collaboration between both teams to include: joint on-site visitations (i.e., school practicum and student teaching experiences), joint interviews with faculty and students, and joint deliberations.

**Preparedness of the Institution*

Institutions must prepare adequate and appropriate documentation of program development for both teams which include materials sent to reviewers before the visit and materials prepared for the Exhibit Rooms during the visit. Mailed documents must be submitted in a timely manner and reviewed in depth by the institution prior to submission to the accrediting agencies. If the perception suggests that the institution has prepared more definitively for the NCATE team than the State team or vice versa, the outcome of the visit can be in jeopardy.

2. Process Versus Product

The Exhibit Room: A Portfolio Approach

Use of portfolios for assessment in the field of education is becoming commonplace (Black, Daiker, Sommers, & Stygall, 1994). Portfolios are typically viewed as preservice teachers'

products or demonstrations of competencies linked to standards, and they present evidence in the form of collections of data. Here, we have adapted their usage to a unit's demonstration of competencies linked to national and state standards for education programs. The process in many ways resembles large-scale portfolio development, requiring IHE's to take active and reflective roles in the accreditation process. In a joint visit, the scope of documentation in an exhibit room must adequately show that the program is in alignment with NCATE general standards, standards mandated for folio review by learned societies, and NASDTEC standards for state licensure.

For college and university departments involved with programs in teacher education, the task of data collection for review can be daunting, and the compilation of documents is often a reactive and harried response to the accrediting agencies. Some institutions of higher education, in fact, have opted out of the accreditation process because of the time commitment required (Gardner, Scannell & Wisniewski, 1996). Proponents of the accreditation process, however, maintain that the effort is essential to improving the status of the profession, and that every institution should not only have structures in place to ensure ongoing program evaluation but should also be prepared at any time for site evaluations (Wise & Leibbrand, 1996).

The following recommendations for a portfolio approach in an accreditation review are suggested:

**Portfolios should result in valid assessments of program goals and curricular alignment.*

In the accreditation process, documentation is generated to demonstrate compliance with standards established by the accrediting agencies. The unit must clearly address how program implementation links to objectives and expected outcomes and what types of data support claims that programs are indeed successful. While typical documentation includes course syllabi, vita, and program descriptions, more attention is given to the impact of programs on teacher candidates in a portfolio approach. For instance, after CUA's 1989 visit, an alumni survey was developed and distributed annually for program evaluation. At CUA and Gallaudet, students prepare a portfolio which demonstrates competencies attained in the program. Samples of these materials were accessible to reviewers. Wise & Leibbrand (1996) suggest that performance assessments that

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document "the knowledge, skills and dispositions of candidates are likely to become the center of the accreditation standards and system" (p. 204).

**Portfolio documentation should be purposeful and sufficient.*

Portfolios, unlike other forms of assessment, are both multi-sourced and integrative (Barton & Collins, 1993). Institutions of higher education must give careful consideration to the scope of documentation needed to demonstrate alignment with standards, drawing specific evidence from multiple sources to enhance the quality of review e.g., syllabi, course descriptions and faculty projects and research, reports of self-study, and descriptions and examples of assignments in course work and fieldwork. The portfolio should also reflect integration across programs, departments, schools, and community as they relate to program outcomes and standards. At Gallaudet, education faculty and faculty in the School of Communication examined the pedagogy of teaching sign language. For CUA, the joint review opened conversations across the university between education and other Arts & Sciences faculty to discuss linkages between pedagogy and content standards, and between licensure, certification, and university distribution requirements. This was particularly important because content specialists in other departments were participating in joint student teaching supervision with education faculty.

**Portfolio evidence must be displayed in a clear and compelling manner.*

Accreditation teams often work within constraints imposed by time allotted for institutional visits and the size of the accreditation team. In order to facilitate the review process, collections of evidence must be accessible and user-friendly. Documentation should be presented in a professional manner, clearly organized, and carefully and clearly indexed according to standards and guidelines. Print documents, multimedia presentations (videos and computer applications) should have appropriate space, and all faculty involved in the unit should be available to facilitate the access to portfolio documentation.

**Portfolios should be dynamic assessments and document growth over time.*

Initial accreditation reviews specifically address all standards and guidelines of the accrediting

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agencies; reviews for re-accreditation focus on ongoing compliance with standards and documentation of program initiatives to address recommendations from previous reviews. Portfolios have potential to capture growth and change through a collection of evidence that demonstrates implementation of initiatives that reflect moving in the direction of compliance with standards. In consideration of reviewers' time and report writing, CUA compiled a file folder for each weakness cited in the last review by the State and NCATE teams, including a brief narrative on changes and initiatives addressing each weakness with supporting documentation and cross-reference sources. The teams must decide weakness-by-weakness whether to retain a particular weakness, or to remove it. Annual reports submitted to NCATE also contained information of growth over time.

**Portfolio development should be an ongoing, reflective process.*

By initiating a mind-set for portfolio development, the process of review becomes a proactive response to ongoing consideration of program outcomes. Faculty members would be guided in taking an active role in reflecting on program delivery and the alignment with standards for effecting quality in teacher education. Through a department-supported structure for ongoing portfolio development and review, departments would have opportunity to reflect on and dialogue about programs on a regular basis, empowering faculty through shared authority for program evaluation.

The Joint Visit as a Process

Programs may be tempted to focus on the joint State-NCATE visit itself as the most important stage in accreditation and program approval. Our experiences, however, were that a detailed and thorough planning process, including the previsit, was most crucial to the success of the entire program improvement and accreditation effort.

Planning a joint visit is significantly different from planning a visit by a single team. The planning should be done jointly by the BOE and State team chairs with the education unit's

NCATE coordinator. Not only will the previsit need a significant time commitment by all three individuals, but they will need to communicate frequently as the date of the visit approaches. Visit planners need to be aware of the large number of people that might be involved in a joint visit if the education unit that has many programs, and the complexities of scheduling and coordinating the movement of these individuals as they interview and observe different individuals and constituencies both on- and off-campus. We found the NCATE template for the visit to be a very helpful starting point for both the BOE and State team, but as the plans for the visit developed we had to make many modifications to accommodate the needs of members of both team and the education unit.

The education unit not only should plan the visit to meet the needs of the joint teams and the agencies they represent, but also should structure it not just to showcase, but especially to *benefit* the education unit's programs. For example, developing a conceptual framework for the teacher education program is not something that is written about last minute in the Institutional Report to impress the readers, but is integral to the education unit's long-term planning. In the case of CUA's visit, the conceptual framework, "deliberative reflection" (see Taylor & Valli, 1992; Valli, 1990) i.e., standing apart from the self to critically examine actions in the context of those actions for the purpose of a more consciously-driven mode of professional activity to improve practice, was in place well before the visit. Complementing and strengthening program objectives, the conceptual framework, in both theory and practice, received high commendations from both State and NCATE teams, after they were able to document its presence in both course and field work, and the faculty's professional development.

In the case of Gallaudet, many of the education unit's programs have the theme "the education professional as collaborator" as an important element in their conceptual framework. Because they were convinced of the intrinsic benefits of collaboration in educational endeavors, they wanted to plan for as much collaboration as possible in the joint visit. As a consequence, Gallaudet:
1) scheduled NCATE and State members together for all of the observations and interviews,

2) designed exhibit rooms for collaborative and broad discussions about categories of standards, 3) reserved meeting rooms which were large enough to accommodate both teams together, and 4) scheduled joint meals, and several joint meetings.

Gallaudet's convictions about the benefits of collaboration were more than justified by the dynamics of the joint visit itself. Expertise was freely shared across teams, so that the evaluation was more thorough than in than in the past when there were two separate team visits. For example, State team members had a better understanding of programs and institutional culture, and NCATE team members had a better understanding of academic standards and the program evaluation process. Similarly, State team members focussed more on content, and the NCATE team focussed more on structures in the unit, but freely shared their observations with each other. A number of team members commented on the benefits of working together, and these benefits were apparent throughout the visit. As a result of their planned collaboration, members of both teams were better able to provide feedback to the unit and consequently had a much more comprehensive understanding of the education unit than when visited separately.

While the costs of a joint visit are high, the total monetary cost was no higher than the expenses of separate State and NCATE visits. The complexities of planning a joint visit, however, were massive, and seemed to demand much more staff time than two separate visits. The excess cost in staff time was somewhat offset by avoiding duplication of effort (i.e., having to arrange exhibits, schedule a visit twice as often, etc.). More important, however, were the benefits to the education unit of having the teams, with their differing orientations, work together to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the unit than a single team could have done. Let us move consideration of the unit preparation to leadership in the accreditation process and implications for the future.

3. Proactive versus Reactive

Although NCATE efforts are designed to complement and encourage state reform efforts, the

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process for joint reviews is a developing and unprescribed one. It is clear that after the visit, the institutions and its programs may be either accredited, provisionally accredited, or denied accreditation. The matter that we found clearer yet, is that *empowerment for a successful joint visit comes from being proactive, not reactive or acted upon by others*. Among the venues for being proactive are: 1) fostering self-study of the university's education unit, 2) working through the state ACTE association, and 3) collaborating with the State Certification and NCATE offices in designing the joint visit.

Proactive through Self-study

Self-study is an essential proactive measure because it allows a university to examine its education unit and program strengths, initiatives, and needed changes, before the visit. Accreditation efforts bind an institution's unit of teacher education in a serious self-study which is not an easy or quick-fix event. All too often, universities follow reactive paths in planning the accreditation visit and get caught up in the technical aspects of the visit, which are very important to a successful visit! We offer those details to you also (see Table 1). However, the preparation, organization, coordination, and logistics of the actual visit must be placed within a bigger picture which involves deliberating, reflecting, and sincerely engaging in self-study as a moral responsibility in preparing teachers to teach children. It is too easy to lose sight of that amidst the particulars of a visit.

Deans and university accreditation coordinators sometimes attend conferences devoted to the procedures for accreditation. At the conferences, it is easy to note the confusion and discord of professors and deans from across the country, who demand to know exactly what they are supposed to submit to NCATE. It is analogous to when students ask "Will this be on the test?" Accreditation specialists struggle to explain that accreditation is a constructive, long-term, and ongoing study that is periodically reported and shared with others.

Two issues are clear: 1) an imposed large-scale self-study that demands the re-construction of professors' personal practice, albeit crucial to teacher education reform (Myers, 1995), is usually

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not understood or appreciated, and 2) the process of inquiry must first begin with ourselves. Teacher educators are often not encouraged to perceive self-study as improving their practice. They do not model or teach self-study to students and have been trained only to study the practice of others (see Samaras, 1998).

Proactive through the state ACTE Association

From the viewpoint of state ACTE associations, several important strategies apply to institutions and to states embarking upon accreditation/program approval visits through State-NCATE partnerships. First, it is incumbent on institutions to ensure that a widespread sense of "ownership" applies to all the faculty in the institution; that concept means NOT centralizing the writing initially into the hands of one individual, but instead having wide involvement through committees who actually collect data and draft responses to standards, thus broadening the level of active involvement.

Second, the institution's coordinator for accreditation may need to take the initiative to ensure that the State Team leader and the NCATE Team Chair are well coordinated with each other; critical activities would include ensuring that both leaders are fully aware of each other's roles, and closely work with the institutional coordinator to guarantee smooth logistical arrangements such as integrated exhibits, complementary meeting times, and if possible joint visits to practicum sites.

Third, in new partnership states, it is entirely possible that the start-up process may result in an initial lack of coordination between state and NCATE at the implementation level, even though an official agreement has been signed. This arena is where the role of the state ACTE association must fit. It is incumbent on institutional leaders to pro-actively work through their state ACTE association to press collectively for a more deeply coordinated State-NCATE partnership process. Without the effort by the collective group of state ACTE members working through the state ACTE association, partnerships may have to evolve slowly and initial institutions may have to serve as "guinea pigs". Such stages are fully avoidable, however, if state ACTE associations work to serve

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as a critically important "bridge" during the first stages of the State Department Office and NCATE collaboration.

During the DCACTE meetings, universities continuously discussed concerns and directions with the State and NCATE offices. Each university was encouraged by the State Director to nominate a faculty member to serve as a state reviewer to promote participation, observation, and discussion of the new and evolving joint State-NCATE visits. Over time, we came to understand how the state ACTE could serve as a forum for universities as they framed their visits and made decisions about the process. Because the joint review process provided only a protocol and was new in the District of Columbia, many questions were still unanswered for CUA and Gallaudet.

After CUA's review, Gallaudet in collaboration with the State and NCATE offices designed its visit differently from CUA's. For example, due to the team composition option, many necessary negotiations were required between the university and the State, the university and NCATE, and between the State and NCATE team chairs prior to the visit, (e.g., the size of the review team, group or individual interviews, individual or joint team observation visits to schools). Several report formats are also available from which states can choose. The single 25-page Institutional Report left little room for addressing state standards, which had been problematic for CUA working with a state that had not used NCATE standards in redesigning their standards. CUA found that preparing program portfolios were creative options for this problem.

During the visit, the organization of the exhibit room must serve both teams, but there is no formula for how this is done. CUA had designated working/exhibit rooms for each team although the teams used both rooms. Exhibits related to curriculum, students, faculty, and the education unit were located in the NCATE exhibit room and exhibits related to curriculum and programs were located in the State exhibit room. On the other hand, Gallaudet set up a joint exhibit room where the two teams operated as a joint team rather than parallel as in the CUA visit. Exhibits related to the knowledge-base, curriculum, and student products were placed in one room and exhibits related to students, faculty, and governance and resources were in another room. As a result,

members of both teams worked through the exhibits together and discussed them with each other.

Proactive through Collaboration with the State and NCATE Offices

A professional community is more dynamic when educators from different walks work as collaborators in teacher preparation. For the District of Columbia Public Schools Teacher Education and Certification Branch, each university review took on a new dimension with new understandings because of the input of each university and the conversations with the NCATE Director of State Relations. It is crucial that the process be a shared one, as a professional community working together instead of complaining together. That professional community is still stronger when based in a state ACTE, working with the State and NCATE offices, although it must begin with the individual university and with institution-wide commitment and support.

Joint State-NCATE Reviews and the Impact on the Future

This writing is a response to the call to action for the teacher preparation community to design a more systemic approach to the professionalism of teaching, i.e., accreditation, licensure, and certification (see Anderson, 1997). It is a representative account of how state ACTE associations can be proactive in framing an agenda for educational reform by facilitating knowledge interchange, and addressing new problems in collaboration with State and NCATE offices. The notion that institutions and state ACTE associations can work collaboratively with State and NCATE offices was successfully tested at CUA and Gallaudet. The co-authors have addressed: 1) their understanding of what partnership means and how State-NCATE ownership issues diffuse the essence of joint reviews, 2) the need for developing and maintaining a framework in thinking about accreditation as a process as well as a product, and 3) how IHE's can be proactive rather than reactive in the joint review process through self-study, the state ACTE association, and the State and NCATE offices.

The partnership agreement in the joint review is beneficial for the institutions in preparation for

a "one-time-visit". Although this process allows the state team to focus more thoroughly on the institutional programs, the interaction with other educators broadens the scope and the review. In the District of Columbia, the adoption of the NCATE standards for institutions not seeking NCATE accreditation, demonstrates the willingness to upgrade requirements for program approval.

The joint review process works successfully if all constituents understand this is not only about education professionals. It is about the children that we educate. It is about the children and their successes today, for the 21st century and beyond. High standards in program approval and state licensure symbolize excellence in teaching and student success. In some arenas, the perception is that we are in a state of urgency to provide what is best for our children. The collaborative efforts afforded by the joint accreditation process highlights our commitment to this cause.

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Table 1

Suggestions for a Successful Joint Review

* Learn from the experiences of other institutions in your state which had joint visits prior to yours. Your state ACTE association may be the best vehicle for facilitating this communication.

*Make it everyone's responsibility; i.e., the state, the state ACTE association, NCATE, and the institution, to communicate the elements of the partnership which include what is expected of each constituency.

*Have a joint previsit meeting with significant time invested in planning visit details.

* Communicate frequently with chairs of both teams not only as you are preparing the details of the visit, but also during the visit itself.

* Write the NCATE Initial or Continuing Accreditation Report with the State Team in mind.

* If a State report is required, cross-reference back to the NCATE report, and share the State report with NCATE team members.

* Set up the exhibit rooms to facilitate interaction between both teams, to provide ease of access to materials, and to avoid duplicating exhibits.

* At the same time, ensure that rooms are available for teams to meet separately.

* Treat State and NCATE teams as equals (e.g., give them the same materials, packets, quality reports).

* After self-study and a joint accreditation visit, faculty members should have a clearer understanding than ever before of the relationship among curriculum, structures, and processes in the professional education unit. Reinforce the connections between this understanding and NCATE and State standards, and use that understanding, with both sets of standards as a framework, to facilitate the process of continuous program improvement.

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